

Changing Careers

By Linda Marling Church

Not so long ago the thought of changing careers might have been motivated by the boredom of going to the same old job every day or dissatisfaction with the pay. Today, “corporate restructuring,” “downsizing” and “buyout” are everyday words, and a pink slip can catapult us into not only looking for a different job but an entirely different career—even when we are educated, trained and productive employees.

What happens when our employer of five, ten, fifteen years or more no longer needs us? Knowing that most people change careers, not jobs, several times over the course of a lifetime is little consolation if it’s not our idea. After the initial shock, and after the momentary delight at the thought of drawing unemployment, it’s time to figure out how to rewrite your story and find a new career.

Assess Your Strengths, Weaknesses And Interests

Go to online.onetcenter.org and take a free assessment produced by the Department of Labor. Take a look inside yourself to see what you could have done to be a better employee. Did you need more training? Write down and elaborate on your skills and interests.

Look For Available Jobs

Attend local job fairs. If you live along the Wasatch Front, get the *Employment Guide* which is free on many street corners and puts out over 50 regional publications nationally. How can you adapt your skills and experiences to these jobs?

Network

Don’t just call former co-workers, although it is a good idea to keep in touch. Use the Internet: Facebook and Twitter are great places to start. Also President Obama sees the need to reform job training and vocational education and has launched a new web site called opportunity.gov which gives information on training, financial aid and GED certificates.

Think Outside The Box

Can you volunteer, get an internship or train on-the-job? Our web site jobs.utah.gov is an excellent site for detailed information on economic stimulus money for retraining and assistance for displaced workers and other job seekers.

Rewrite Your Resume

How can you take your skills and bridge the gap between the old career and a new one? Rewrite your resume and

cover letter to fit each position you’re applying for; don’t use the same approach for every job you find. Study the companies you are applying to. What are their needs and how can you fit into them? Illustrate how you embody a skill, don’t just say you possess it.

If You Get An Interview

In a recent article by Anita Bruzzese in *The Wall Street Journal* she relates how a good story is memorable. That is the goal of any job applicant: to be remembered by the interviewer. So, rehearse a good story, one that is true and which you believe in, that bridges the gap between your skills and those needed by the employer.

Alexandra Levit also wrote a series of articles for *The Wall Street Journal* focusing on reinventing yourself in the workplace.

Find A Survival Job

Maybe those golden arches aren’t so bad after all, especially once the end of unemployment is in sight. It is common today for higher-paid employees to take lower-paying jobs with such a limited supply of jobs of any kind. A few dollars an hour is better than none, every job provides learning experience, and maybe the basis for a good story. ©

